

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (previously presented) A tele-inventory system for counting the number of commodities and/or checking the expiration dates of the commodities for inventorying various kinds of commodities in a shop by an operator from a remote management apparatus that is installed remotely from the shop, comprising:

at the shop

camera means for taking images of object commodities to be inventoried;

image-transmitter means for transmitting said taken images of the object commodities to the remote management apparatus;

at the remote management apparatus

image-receiver means for receiving said taken images of the object commodities from said image-transmitter means; and

display means for displaying said taken images of the object commodities which images have been received by said image-receiver means, whereby the operator is able to make an inventory of the object commodities at the remote management apparatus with consulting said taken images of the object commodities which images have been displayed on said display means.

2. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 1, further comprising:

at the remote management apparatus

instruction-transmitter means for transmitting instructions of the operator to the shop;

and

at the shop

instruction-receiver means for receiving said instructions of the operator from the remote management apparatus.

3. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 2, further comprising:

at the shop

camera control means for controlling said camera means based on said instructions of the operator, which have been received by said instruction-receiver means.

4. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 3, further comprising:
at the shop

manipulator means for manipulating a posture and a position of the individual object commodity; and

manipulator controlling means for controlling said manipulator means based on said instructions of the operator, which have been received by said instruction-receiver means.

5. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 3, further comprising:
at the shop

a database for previously storing commodity information about a correlation between the individual object commodity and position information about a position of the individual object commodity; and

said camera control means being operable, based on said instructions received by said instruction-receiver means, to read, from said database, commodity information with respect to the individual object commodity contained in said instructions, and to control said camera means in such a manner that said camera means takes an image of the last-named individual object commodity.

6. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 1, further comprising:
at the remote management apparatus

pointer means for pointing the individual object commodity in said taken images of the object commodities which images have been displayed on said display means; and

marker means for labeling said taken image of the individual object commodity, which image has been pointed by said pointing device, with a predetermined mark.

7. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 6, further comprising:
at the remote management apparatus

counter means for counting the number of images of the object commodities which have been labeled with the predetermined marks by said marker means

8. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 2, further comprising:
at the remote management apparatus

pointer means for pointing a particular object commodity in said taken images of the object commodities which images have been displayed on said display means; and

marker means for labeling said taken image of said particular object commodity, which

image has been pointed by said pointer means, with a predetermined special mark.

9. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 8, further comprising:
at the shop

in-shop display means for displaying a marked image, which is the image labeled with said predetermined special mark by said marker means and which has been received together with instructions of the operator by said instruction-receiver means of the shop from said instruction-transmitter means of the remote management apparatus, so that a sales clerk of the shop sees said marked image to make arrangements for various processes based on the last-named instructions of the operator.

10. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 1, wherein said camera means serves also as a security camera, which is usually previously installed in the shop.

11. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 1, wherein the remote management apparatus is a mobile information processing terminal to be operated by the operator.

12. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 1, wherein the remote management apparatus is installed at a remote place in a different time zone from the time zone of a shop place where the shop is located.

13. (original) A tele-inventory system according to claim 5, wherein:
said image-transmitter means and said instruction-receiving means are communicably connected to a plurality of customer information terminals to be operated by individual customers of the shop;

upon receipt of a direction containing the name of a target commodity from the individual customer information terminal,

at the shop

said camera control means reads, from said database, commodity information with respect to the individual object commodity corresponding to the target commodity contained in the direction of the individual customer based on the direction, and controls said camera means in such a manner that said camera means takes an image of the target commodity; and

said image-transmitter means transmits the last-named taken image of the target commodity taken by said camera means to the last-named customer information terminal.

14. (withdrawn) An in-shop terminal for use in a tele-inventory system in which various kinds of commodities in a shop are inventoried by an operator from a remote management apparatus that is installed remotely from the shop, there being installed at the shop camera means for taking images of object commodities in the shop, comprising:

image-transmitter means for transmitting the images of object commodities, which images have been taken by the camera means at the shop, to the remote management apparatus;

instruction-receiver means for receiving instructions of the operator from the remote management apparatus; and

camera control means for controlling the camera means based on said instructions of the operator from the remote management apparatus which instructions have been received by said receiving means.

15. (withdrawn) An in-shop terminal according to claim 14, further comprising manipulator controlling means for controlling, based on said operator's instructions received by said instruction-receiver means, manipulator means installed in the shop and operable to manipulate a posture and a position of the individual object commodity.

16. (withdrawn) An in-shop terminal according to claim 15, further comprising:

a database for previously storing commodity information about a correlation between the individual object commodity and position information about the position of the last-named individual object commodity; and

said camera control means being operable, based on said operator's instructions received by said instruction-receiver means, to read commodity information with respect to the individual object commodity contained in the operator's instructions, from said database, and to control the camera means in such a manner that the camera means takes an image of the last-named individual object commodity.

17. (withdrawn) An in-shop terminal according to claim 14, further comprising an in-shop display means for displaying a marked image which has been returned by the remote management apparatus and which has been received by said instruction-receiver means.

18. (withdrawn) An in-shop terminal according to claim 16, wherein:

said image-transmitter means and said instruction-transmitter means are communicably connected to a plurality of customer information terminals to be operated by individual customers of the shop;

upon receipt of a direction containing the name of a target commodity from the individual customer information terminal,

said camera control means reads, from said database, commodity information with respect to the individual object commodity corresponding to the target commodity contained in the direction of the individual customer based on said customer's direction, and controls the camera means of the shop in such a manner that the camera means takes an image of the target commodity; and

said image-transmitter means transmits the image of the target commodity, which image has been taken by the camera means of the shop, to the last-named customer information terminal.

19. (withdrawn) A remote management apparatus for use in a tele-inventory system in which various kinds of commodities in a shop are inventoried by an operator from said remote management apparatus, there being at the shop camera means for taking images of object commodities and image-transmitter means for transmitting the taken images of the object commodities to said remote management apparatus, comprising:

image-receiver means for receiving the images of the object commodities, which images have been taken by the camera means of the shop, from the image-transmitter means of the shop;

display means for displaying the taken images of the object commodities which images have been received by said image-receiver means; and

instruction-transmitter means for transmitting instructions of the operator, which are for making an inventory of the object commodities in the shop, to the shop.

20. (withdrawn) A remote management apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

pointer means for pointing the individual object commodity in the taken images of the object commodities which images have been displayed on said display means; and

marker means for labeling the taken image of the individual object commodity, which image has been pointed by said pointer means, with a predetermined mark.

21. (withdrawn) A remote management apparatus according to claim 20, further comprising counter means for counting the number of images of the object commodities which images each have been labeled with said predetermined mark by said marker means.

22. (withdrawn) A remote management apparatus according to claim 19, further

comprising:

pointer means for pointing a particular object commodity in the taken images of the object commodities which images have been displayed on said display means; and

marker means for labeling the taken image of said particular object commodity, which image has been pointed by said pointer means, with a predetermined special mark

23. (withdrawn) A remote management apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the marked image, which is the image labeled with said predetermined special mark by said marker means, is returned to the shop together with instructions of the operator.

24. (previously presented) A method for conducting inventory, comprising:

imaging an item; and

remotely conducting inventory of the item based on said imaging.